

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SOCIAL SERVICES

DATE: JUNE 24, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS BENTLEY
STRAINER
MCDEVITT

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS PITKIN
KENNY
MERLINO
LOEB

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:

SHEILA WEAVER, COMMISSIONER
MARGARET SING-SMITH, DIRECTOR OF THE YOUTH BUREAU
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE
& FISCAL SERVICES
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN
NICOLE LIVINGSTON, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS THOMAS
TAYLOR
DON LEHMAN, THE POST STAR
TOM RANDALL, ADIRONDACK JOURNAL
JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

In the absence of the Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Mr. Bentley announced that a quorum was reached with the presence of Chairman Monroe and called the meeting of the Social Services Committee to order at 10:45 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Sheila Weaver, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS), who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Ms. Weaver presented two Personnel requests, the first of which was a request to fill the vacant position of Caseworker #20 in the Child Protective Unit, base salary of \$34,776, Employee No. 11719, due to termination.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position as outlined above and to refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Weaver requested to fill the vacant position of Caseworker #4 in the Adult Services Unit, base salary of \$34,776, Employee No. 8448, due to resignation.

Motion was made by Mr. McDevitt, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position as outlined above and to refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position is on file with the*

minutes.

Subsequent to conducting research on Homeless housing expenditures, Ms. Weaver reported that expenditures had decreased over the past three years with a net result of approximately \$340,000 for 2010. Chairman Monroe noted the evidence of shorter average stays and Ms. Weaver concurred. She noted that although sex offenders typically required lengthy stays, the average stay of other homeless individuals was less than two weeks. Mr. McDevitt remarked that the total number of individual cases had decreased considerably and Ms. Weaver affirmed a decrease and pointed out that the figures for 2010 included a six month period.

Regarding the meeting of DSS Commissioners held yesterday in Albany, New York, Ms. Weaver apprised that reimbursement for the Child Welfare Program would be reduced by 1.7% to 62% with a retroactive effective date of April 1, 2010 which included both programming and staff salaries. According to Ms. Weaver, the State would seek recoupment of monies owed to them for the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) in a lump sum payment versus the installment arrangement previously agreed to whereby the County would have paid approximately \$90,000 in 2011 and the balance of \$40,000 in 2012. She summarized that Warren County had received a bill from the State for \$150,000 local share for OCFS, which was not included in the Budget. Other funding reductions, according to Ms. Weaver, included a reduction in Flexible Family Services (FFFS); however, she stated, the amount of the reduction was unknown at this time. Ms. Weaver informed that the State had implemented another unfunded mandate; requiring the County to produce and mail monthly receipts to all recipients of rental assistance, requiring additional staff time and incurring postage fees.

Discussion ensued and Ms. Weaver explained that OCFS expenses provided placement of juvenile delinquents in State detention facilities. She reiterated that the billing process had not been carried out in a timely manner and although a payment plan had been previously offered, it was no longer an option. Paul Dusek, County Attorney/Commissioner of Administrative and Fiscal Services, stated that his research had confirmed that a law had been in existence and the OCFS had the authority to bill Warren County in the manner described. He noted that the State had not carried out the administrative billing function; however, he said, the total amount was due from Warren County. Ms. Weaver reiterated that the Child Welfare reimbursement had decreased considerably over the past several years to the current rate of 62%. Responding to Chairman Monroe, Ms. Weaver explained that CPS was covered under Child Welfare which also included Child Protective Services, Preventive Services, Foster Care and Adoption Services. In response to an inquiry from Mr. Strainer, Ms. Weaver stated that if Warren County failed to pay the amount due, the State would withhold claims reimbursement. Mr. Dusek noted that the withholding of reimbursements by the State was true throughout many counties which resulted in cash flow problems. He further stated that the State had also experienced cash flow problems which necessitated the need for State Budget resolve.

With regard to technology upgrades, Ms. Weaver stated that numerous computers were in need of the updated version of Outlook e-mail and the State refused to pay for upgrades for computers older than five or six years, which comprised approximately one-third of the department's inventory. She noted that there were approximately 130 computers in the Department and the cost for the upgrades had not been determined at this time. Mr. Strainer stated that it was his understanding that the Information Technology (IT) Department had a five-year upgrade plan in place. Chairman Monroe asked which version was currently in use and questioned the level of urgency and Mr. Dusek suggested that he meet with Ms. Weaver,

Chairman Monroe, and the IT Department to discuss the details relative to compatibility and cost containment. Mr. Dusek confirmed that older computers with older software versions required more memory; thereby inhibiting functionality and efficiency. Mr. Taylor suggested alternative programs be explored and Mr. Dusek concurred.

Continuing the Agenda review, Ms. Weaver announced that Nora Merkle was recognized as the Team Player of the Month in the Department, for performing above and beyond her regular duties by volunteering to assist another unit that required additional help.

Ms. Weaver summarized the overtime report included in the Agenda, a copy of which is also on file with the minutes. She noted that overtime was down by an average of two hours per week.

Pertaining to the Budget Performance Report, Ms. Weaver stated that she had utilized the new reporting format. She noted that regular salaries and overtime had decreased for both DSS and Countryside by 12% and 16.5% respectively, and other figures were on target for the first half of 2010. Relative to the new reporting system, Mr. Dusek commented that the Public Health Department had used the new system and he had received positive feedback from the Supervisors. Subsequently, he stated, he had encouraged all Department Heads to use the new format on a trial basis. Upon successful trial of the program, he stated, IT assistance could be arranged to assist smaller departments. Chairman Monroe asked if the budget performance report results were the result of personnel restructuring and Ms. Weaver replied affirmatively. She added that some of the change was due to personnel changes and if the trend continued, the outcome would be favorable.

Ms. Weaver apprised that pending items would be carried forward at this time. Mr. McDevitt informed that additional time would be required relative to the homeless housing issue and Jack Diamond, Mayor for the City of Glens Falls, was in the process of collecting pertinent information.

Mr. Taylor asked what portion of the 221 homeless clients were sex offenders and Ms. Weaver replied between 10 to 15. She stated that the average census of sex offenders was 6 per week and 9 were released from parole in June 2010.

Commencing the agenda review for Countryside Adult Home, Ms. Weaver stated that overtime had decreased by 12% and medical leaves and call-ins required overtime usage due to the fact that the Countryside Adult Home was a 24 hour facility. She reported that the current census remained at 43 and Deanna Park, Director of the Countryside Adult Home, was processing a new client intake today. She further reported there were 4 referrals, 2 admissions, and 2 applications pending for the month. She noted there were no discharges for the reporting period.

Addressing applications for Veterans' Aid, Ms. Weaver reported that 6 applications were completed, and 9 were pending additional information. She apprised that benefits would be retroactive to the date of the applications and she estimated over \$1,600 in Veterans' Aid and approximately \$1,200 in spousal benefits could be realized. The current State/Local percentages, she said, were 50/50 respectively.

Ms. Weaver presented a request to amend the Salary Schedule and Table of Organization to

change the title of the Director of Residential Hall to the Director of Countryside Adult Home.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the request to change the position title as outlined above and to refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Relative to pending items, Ms. Weaver stated that she was uncertain if a subcommittee and leadership had been established to address the future of the Countryside Adult Home. She noted that both residents and staff had inquired about the future of the facility. She advised that the State would likely approve the necessary waiver allowing the use of available space at Countryside Adult Home to be used as temporary housing for the homeless.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Margaret Sing-Smith, Director of the Youth Bureau, who presented a request to amend the 2010 County Budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$1,000, to reflect funds received from the Junior Tennis Foundation Grant.

Motion was made by Mr. McDevitt, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend the 2010 County Budget as outlined above and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request to Amend County Budget is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Smith presented a request for a contract with the Towns of Chestertown, Johnsburg and Lake Luzerne to allocate Junior Tennis Foundation Grant funds in the amounts of \$200, \$500, and \$300 respectively, from July 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010, for a total amount not to exceed \$1,000.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the request as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the July 16, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Concluding her Agenda review, Ms. Smith stated that in accordance with funding requirements, she planned to make site visits to the municipalities that received grant funding. She apprised that plans were underway with the Health Services Department and Cornell Cooperative Extension for recreation staff training for both youth and Town staff in Warrensburg. The training, she said, would include first aid safety and Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), as well as leadership programming. Lastly, Ms. Smith stated that the Youth Bureau would co-sponsor a Youth Suicide Prevention Workshop in the fall which was a partnership with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The program, she stated, would be available to all County Departments.

As there was no further business to come before the Social Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Strainer and seconded by Mr. McDevitt, Mr. Bentley adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist